



Bowburn Primary School

Surtees Avenue

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Head Teacher

Mrs J Glass

Deputy Head teachers

Mr P Soler, Miss C Noble

Monday 25th May 2020

Dear Parents/ Carers of Pupils in Year 6, Year 1 , Nursery and Reception,

Once again, I will start by saying a huge thank you to every one of you, dealing with the challenging circumstances we all find ourselves in. The last 8 weeks have been hard for us all, and the future still remains uncertain. As you help your children to deal with the changing circumstances and many challenges, I can only thank you on behalf of all of the staff for supporting them through these unprecedented times. The challenges are far from over, but now we begin a new phase.

Last week was a very busy and difficult week for myself as headteacher as I began to assimilate the detailed guidance from Government and the Local Authority on starting to welcome pupils from our nursery, reception, year 1 and Year 6 back to school. I have asked all of you to indicate your intentions through a survey, and I thank you for responding. This has given me some idea of the numbers we need to manage. Not everyone has yet responded, if you haven't please do so as soon as possible by emailing school or completing the online survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/99SG9QL>

I appreciate this will have been a difficult decision for you when you are unaware of the nature of what is on offer and what happens next. I hope to clarify this in my letter more fully today.

I have also spent time discussing the details of the phased return of pupils with Governors, the school's Local Authority adviser and the staff. The discussions have focussed on planning how as a school we can reopen as safely as possible for the pupils and staff. This has not been an easy task, making the right decisions which put the safety of children, staff and their families at the forefront- and there is still much work to be done. Guidance on pupils returning continues to arrive and it is extremely detailed- the guidance on the opening of Early Years settings (i.e. our Nursery and Reception) only arrived yesterday afternoon. Detailed guidance on cleaning was received last Friday. Government advice has been updated twice already, and may be updated again before children return. The final decision on schools returning will be confirmed by Government on 28th May.

After these detailed discussions, and considering what is happening nationally with corona virus and in County Durham in particular in terms of infection rates , Governors have agreed that school will begin a safe phased return to pupils in priority year groups from Monday 8th June.
Please note we are unable to accommodate any children from our 2 year old nursery.

This will also give us enough time to ensure that the three school buildings are fully prepared, and in the case of the nursery and junior buildings which have been shut since March, re-opened, deep cleaned and ready for pupils to return as safely as possible.

This will be a phased return so pupils will not be offered more than two days (or sessions for some nursery pupils) per week, initially. There will be no breakfast or after school clubs. We will evaluate how this runs before considering any increase in numbers of sessions . At present there are no plans to allow pupils in other year groups (Y2, Y3, Y4 and Y5), because as yet there is no guidance from Government on how this will be managed, and there may be insufficient classroom space available to do so.

Next, I would like to give you more details on what the phased return will look like:

As I said in my last update, the school will be very different to the one that your child left in March. We are of course all not happy about this, but the information below is all based on the advice and guidance we have been given from Government and other sources.

Groupings:

We will aim to keep pupils in groups or 'bubbles', with the same pupils and staff. This will lower the risk of infection spread. We will aim to limit these groupings to up to 9 pupils as this is the maximum our classrooms can safely accommodate when pupils are socially distanced (2 meters apart) Children will work, play and eat with the



same 'bubble' of children and staff, as far as possible. Classrooms will have all resources that cannot easily be cleaned removed and desks will be spaced out. Children will play outside in their 'bubble' groupings and will not mix with children from other 'bubbles'. They may not be with their own class teacher.

Nursery will be based in the nursery building, and children will be dropped at the usual door and should be able to come into nursery on their own as **Parents/carers will not be able to enter any part of the school buildings**. All pupils who have 30 hours entitlement are being asked to bring packed lunches which will be eaten in the nursery. Enhanced PPE (personal protective equipment) such as face masks will need to be worn by staff for nappy changing, please make your child aware of this, and please encourage toilet training at home.

Start/ finish times:

To allow for staggered start/ finish to the school day, children will have given start and end times and we ask that you stick closely to these. The details of these will be shared nearer to June 8th. I appreciate this may be difficult for you to manage if you have pupils of different ages or who need to attend different buildings, but it is the only way we can manage safe access and exit following the guidance. Year 6 pupils who normally walk home unaccompanied can do so but must not socialise with friends. One adult from the child's immediate family must accompany children to school. Parents should take care with parking if they drive to school and **MUST** socially distance (2 metres) on the yard, and leave immediately once children have been dropped off or collected at the designated entrances. Pupils will come immediately into school, wash their hands, hang up their coats and go to classrooms. No bags or belongings other than packed lunches may be brought into school. At the end of the day, pupils will be brought to the designated exits for dismissal and parents and pupils should leave the school site immediately.

Key worker /vulnerable pupils:

The existing groups will continue, but from June 8th junior pupils of keyworkers (Y3-6) will be based at the junior building and Key stage 1 and nursery pupils at the infant building. Unfortunately, we have no space to accommodate any new children of keyworkers, as pupils will be kept as a separate 'bubble' within their key stage and no new pupils can be introduced to this group.

Playtime/lunchtimes:

These will also be staggered to allow safe use of spaces and to prevent mixing. Large outdoor play equipment may not be able to be used. All pupils who wish to take a school lunch will be provided with a packed lunch. Packed lunches will be eaten in the classrooms for social distancing reasons. Parents in receipt of free school meals vouchers will not continue to receive these if they opt for a school packed lunch. Children's playtime after eating lunch may need to be reduced and again pupils will play only with pupils in their 'bubbles'.

Hygiene /handwashing/ social distancing:

There will be a huge emphasis on this aspect for obvious reasons, with pupils encouraged to practice good hand hygiene and wash their hands regularly and thoroughly throughout the day, supervised by staff. Please encourage this with your child and also using tissues to 'catch it, bin it, kill it' when they cough or sneeze.

- DO NOT send your child to school if they show symptoms of corona virus (high temperature or continuous cough or are generally unwell,) as they will be isolated in school and you will be asked to collect them immediately.
- Do not send your child to school if they are clinically vulnerable, have an underlying serious medical condition, or live with a family member who is shielding. If in doubt ask a medical professional for advice.
- Thorough cleaning of the school will be undertaken regularly and throughout the day following guidance from Durham County and Government. Additional supplies of soap, paper towels, tissues, cleaning products, hand sanitiser and PPE has been ordered. **School will not reopen until PPE has been delivered, as it must be used if staff or pupils develop corona virus symptoms, when cleaning is undertaken, and during first aid or personal care.**
- Any child who is known to not socially distance outside of school (i.e. is found to be spending time with others outside of the family home, playing out with friends etc) will not be allowed to return to school, as this could introduce infection.
- Guidance says children should wear clothes which should be changed every day, and these should be washed immediately once children return home. If we notice this is not happening we will contact parents.
- Keeping children 2 metres apart will be encouraged by staff as far as possible and as I'm sure you can imagine this will be difficult for all of the children but especially with our youngest pupils or those with special needs who may not understand or always be able to follow this rule. This is the area where I am most concerned as to how the guidance will work in reality. **Please understand that we cannot guarantee that social distancing will always be achieved. This fact should be given careful consideration by parents when deciding to send your child back to school.**



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- If a child needs to be comforted, reassured, helped with their work, wants to hold a hand or give a hug to a friend or a teacher, be toileted, needs to be helped after a playground accident or to be given first aid - then what happens? For some of these it will be difficult or impossible for staff to act in the usual manner, as they also need to socially distance themselves if they can. There are no easy answers! Obviously, pupils' safety is paramount and they will be cared for and kept safe, but these are difficult questions and you as parents need to consider them also. I need to keep children safe but also my staff- so many of these situations may be handled differently and be difficult for some children to understand. Please prepare your child by talking to them about this.
- Any child who deliberately and repeatedly doesn't follow the rules on hygiene, social distancing, and general behaviour in the classroom and outside will be unable to continue to attend, and a parent will be called immediately to take them home. This is for everyone's safety.

In school and home learning:

Please be aware that children will not be attending school in order to 'catch up' with any curriculum learning they have missed. The changes to the school day, the learning environment we will be working in, social distancing measures and staffing changes cannot make this possible in reality. Realistically, it is likely that any meaningful catching up won't be possible until all the pupils return. Staff will be spending the vast majority of time settling children back into school and in some cases renewing their learning habits, reassuring children and dealing with any issues and questions that they may have. Staff will carry out formal teaching when appropriate and there will also be an emphasis as far as possible on enjoyment- as there is currently. Pupils will learn outside when they can. A PSHE (personal, social, and health education) focus for work will be used to answer questions and deal with issues that children want to explore. Home learning tasks on line will still be provided for those pupils who are not attending school, and we very much appreciate the efforts everyone has made to keep learning going during lockdown.

I will shortly be contacting all parents again who indicated they would wish their child to attend school for the remainder of the school year, to firm up arrangements.

I am sure you can appreciate this is once more a challenging time for us all, as 'lock- down' is eased and the children begin returning to school. I have tried to be as open as I can with the practicalities and I know it will sound like a harsh reality to many of you. I will need the help and support of everyone to make this next stage work, for the children in particular, as we move tentatively back towards some sort of normality in school.

Please get in touch if you have any further questions.

Kind regards, stay safe

Mrs Glass

